

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 043964

FOLLOWING REPEAT LIMA 01389 SENT ACTION SECSTATE FEB 14.
QUOTE S E C R E T LIMA 1389

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1, IMPDET

TAGS: MASS, PE, NL

SUBJECT: PERUVIAN PURCHASE OF DTUCH DESTROYER

REF: (A) STATE 0146787, (B) LIMA 1216, (C) LIMA 77 - 7360

1. DURING MY INTERVIEW WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND
AMBASSADOR EGO AGUIRRE ON FEBRUARY 13 THE LATTER SAID
THAT HE HAD CHECKED WITH "THE ADMIRALS" ON MY INQUIRY
ON THIS SUBJECT. IT WAS HIS INFORMATION THAT THE
PURCHASE OF THE DESTROYER HAD BEEN "PROGRAMMED" FOR
SOME YEARS. FURTHER, THE DESTROYER IS MEANT TO REPLACE
AN OLD CRUISER. I REPLIED THAT THE POINT AT ISSUE WAS
THE COMMITMENT NOT TO BUY NEW ARMS AND OUR IMPRESSION
THAT THIS PURCHASE TOOK PLACE AFTER MORALES BERMUDEZ
TOLD US NO NEW ARMS WOULD BE PURCHASED. THE FOREIGN
MINISTER SAID NO, THAT WAS NOT THE CASE AT ALL; THE
PURCHASE OF THE DESTROYER HAD BEEN PLANNED LONG BEFORE,
AS HE COULD TESTIFY FROM PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE. DE LA
PUENTE THEN NOTED THAT HE SIGNED OFF ON ALL FOREIGN

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MILITARY PURCHASES AND COULD ASSURE US THAT NO NEW ARMS
WERE BEING PURCHASED. I REPEATED THAT OUR INTEREST WAS
IN THE COMMITMENT. THE MINISTER AND EGO AGUIRRE HAD
NOTHING FURTHER TO ADD.

2. AT LUNCH LATER ON FEBRUARY 13 I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY
TO DISCUSS THE MATTER PRIVATELY WITH ADMIRAL PARODI,

THE MINISTER OF THE NAVY. HE WAS AWARE OF MY INQUIRY AND OF THE COMMITMENT NOT TO BUY NEW ARMS. HE RECALLED THAT THE DECISION TO BUY A DESTROYER HAD BEEN TAKEN MORE THAN THREE YEARS AGO WHEN HE WAS DIRECTOR OF "ECONOMICS" FOR THE NAVY. HE ASSERTED THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DUTCH HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR TWO YEARS AND REMINDED ME OF THE USG REFUSAL TO PROVIDE A SHIP. THE DESTROYER, IN HIS VERSION, IS TO REPLACE THE CRUISER QUINONES IN THE ACTIVE FLEET, THE LATTER BEING CONVERTED TO A TRAINING VESSEL. I REVIEWED FOR PARODI OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE TIMING OF THIS PURCHASE IN LIGHT OF THE COMMITMENT. THE ADMIRAL REITERATED THAT THE TRANSACTION GOES BACK "YEARS" AND SAID THE NAVY WILL HOLD TO THE COMMITMENT.

4. COMMENT: THESE RESPONSES WERE NORMALLY VAGUE AND PROBABLY EVASIVE. BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE PERUVIANS DO GENUINELY CONSIDER THE DESTROYER A PIPELINE ITEM IRRESPECTIVE OF WHEN THE FORMAL CONTRACT WAS SIGNED. AS THE DEPARTMENT'S OWN RECORDS WILL INDICATE, THE DECISION TO ACQUIRE A DESTROYER FOR JATES# FRO AT LEAST 1974. IN ANY CASE, I THINK WE HAVE MADE OUR POINT QUITE EFFECTIVELY. PARODI APPEARED WORRIED AND ANXIOUS TO REASSURE ME, AN UNCHARACTERISTIC ATTITUDE WHICH I ASSUME REFLECTED MORE GENERAL CONCERN IN THE GOP. THE PERUVIANS ARE ON NOTICE IN THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY THAT SOMEONE SOMEWHERE WANTS TO TEMPT THEM ONCE
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AGAIN.

5. I CAN PURSUE THIS MATTER FURTHER IF THE DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT NECESSARY. BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT WE WOULD GET MUCH MORE IN THE WAY OF A RESPONSE THAN REITERATED ASSERTIONS THAT THE DESTROYER WAS INCLUDED WITHIN THOSE PURCHASES ALREADY SET WHEN THE GOP MADE ITS STATEMENTS TO US ABOUT FUTURE ACQUISITIONS. I DO INTEND TO REMIND THE GOP AGAIN BEFORE I LEAVE NEXT WEEK THAT WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ANY OTHER UNDISCLOSED ITEMS IN THE PIPELINE.

6. ONE MORE GENERAL COMMENT. IT IS NOT CLEAR TO ME WHY WE HAVE CHOSEN TO TAKE AS "THE COMMITMENT" STATEMENTS MADE LAST AUGUST BY A TEAM OF CIVILIAN FINANCIAL FUNCTIONARIES OF RELATIVELY LOW RANK AND PRECARIOUS TENURE. I BELIEVE WE ARE ON FIRMER GROUND REFERRING TO THE STATEMENT MADE BY MORALES BERMUDEZ TO TWO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE AND TO ME AUGUST 25 (REF C) AND TO THE SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS IN SEPTEMBER.
SHLAUDEMAN UNQUOTE VANCE

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